

FREE

Kent on Sunday

www.kentnews.co.uk January 8, 2017

North & West edition No 746

BUSINESS

Dreamland's £10m to get ready for sale

Theme park set for new owners this year

DEATH

Pram race doubt after tragedy

Hundreds attended as event took horrific turn

ICON

Remembering Bowie one year on

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Kent on Sunday

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To hire or not to hire, that is the council question

THE plight of local councils over recent years has filled plenty of column inches in this newspaper - and, almost inevitably, will no doubt continue to do, such is the scale of the challenges they face.

But, as we report on page five this week, one council is taking a step which may suggest a fundamental shift in the way they are structured going forward.

Swale has opted not to fill the vacancy of its out-going chief executive, instead saying it may wait until late 2018 before doing so.

On the one hand, this could be interpreted as simple sound common sense. Why rush into such a vital hire, why not take your time? Or, it could be a simple cost-saving decision. The current CEO earns around £198,000. Or, could it be simply that the very nature of our councils could be on the cusp of changing beyond recognition?

The decision of a number of

councils in east Kent to hold informal discussions about merging into one 'super council' makes the prospect of a restructuring of the second tier of local government in the county seem ever more likely. Not necessarily out of choice, but a sheer fight to survive.

So we should also, in that case, assume others must be, at the very least, considering their options. And they would be remiss in their duties if they were not to. After all, they have a duty to examine always the best use of public money.

As for Swale, this is purely personal speculation, but if a radically altered council emerges by 2020 then perhaps it is wise to keep its power dry in these austere times.

Either way, it is something worth keeping an eye on as it may yet give us a hint at not only the confidence in the current status quo and what lurks around the corner.



Editor **Chris Britcher**

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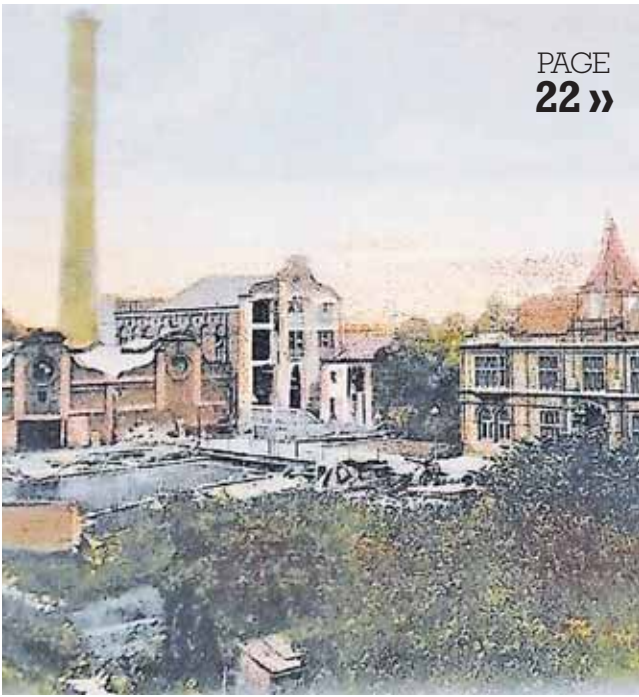
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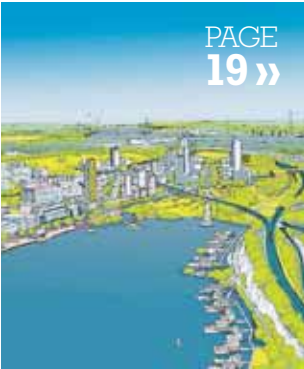
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HOW TO CONTACT US...

Editor: Chris Britcher
Email chris.britcher@archant.co.uk
Address: Kent House, 81 Station Road, Ashford TN23 1PP
Editorial: News: 01233 653475
Sport/Leisure: 01233 653479
Email editorial@kosmedia.co.uk
Advertising:
Jobs/Notices: 01233 653461
Business: 01233 653461
Email appointments@kosmedia.co.uk
Retail/Leisure/Motors: 01233 653461
Email sales@kosmedia.co.uk
Distribution: 01233 653470

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Dreamland gets £10m to prepare itself to be sold

By Tom Pyman

tom.pyman@archant.co.uk

THE cash-strapped operator of Margate's troubled leisure complex, Dreamland, has received a boost after its loan facility was extended to almost £10m in a bid to prepare the site for a sale.

Sands Heritage Ltd entered administration in May last year after racking up debts of some £14m but has now received investment to the tune of up to £9.915m from hedge fund company Arrowgrass, which is based in the Cayman Islands.

A report issued to the operator's creditors last year warned a sale was likely in the future if not immediately, and now administrators have told KoS the cash from Arrowgrass is earmarked for investment within the site in order to prepare it for a potential sale later in the year.

Thanet North MP, the Conservative Sir Roger Gale, told us: "If it's going to be sold I'd like to see it bought by somebody who knows and understands the leisure business. Dreamland is not just an amusement park it's a 365-day-a-



COMPLEX: Dreamland's revival has been dogged by financial concerns

year leisure complex - it's a unique facility, it's got its own magic and its potential is huge.

"Margate still has plenty to offer and I would argue the best is yet to come. If we can find the best person and stop the council meddling, the future is bright."

Sir Roger has repeatedly blamed the local authority for "letting down" Sands Heritage though the council has distanced itself from any responsibility for the operator's

plight. Council chiefs failed to respond to his comments when contacted by KoS this week.

However, former Thanet councillor and blogger Ian Driver felt the investment was a move to benefit Arrowgrass, rather than the local community.

"The original plan for Dreamland was that it would be managed by a charitable trust and that profits would be invested back into the park and the local community

to help to regenerate Margate and Thanet," he said. "Dreamland was acquired, restored and opened by the investment of at least £20m of public money.

"This massive public investment is now helping to enrich people who are already incredibly wealthy, instead of helping to tackle poverty and deprivation in Margate."

Arrowgrass was unavailable for comment.

Council stalls on CEO appointment until at least September 2018

COUNCILLORS in Swale say they are stalling on appointing a new chief executive until at least September 2018 as it prepares to bid farewell to outgoing Abdool Kara next month.

Mr Kara, who earned £198,000 as head of Swale Borough Council, leaves next month to join the National Audit Office as executive leader of local services.

Councillors will discuss the options open to them this week, but are set to appoint current director of corporate services Mark Radford as interim CEO and share out key duties among the senior management team.

It would be significant both as a cost-saving mechanism and in a period where some councils in Kent are pondering options of merging functions to maximise efficiencies in the face of relentless cuts in central government funding.

Deputy council leader, Gerry Lewin, said: "Given the fast pace of change and continuation of austerity in the public sector, the council

needs to remain responsive and flexible if we are to achieve our corporate priorities in 2018.

"The proposed interim arrangements would help us maintain momentum and stability that could be lost through inevitable uncertainty and delay caused by an external recruitment process. It also gives us the chance to take a period of time to reflect on the wider strategic picture facing district authorities, whilst maintaining progress.

"The director of corporate services has significant senior management experience within the council, has covered on occasions in the past the substantive elements of the chief executive role, and has wide managerial experience, including in property and transformation."

The council's appointments sub-committee will discuss the plans on Tuesday. It will then put forward recommendations before a final decision is made at full council on January 25.

Agency hands over images in George Michael death probe

A PHOTO agency has been asked by police to hand over images shot outside the home of pop star George Michael as it continues its investigation into his shock death.

The singer, 53, was found dead at his home in Oxford on Christmas Day.

Now Flynet Pictures, which has offices in West Malling, has been asked to pass pictures over it took on Christmas Eve as it attempts to piece

together the last 24 hours of the Wham! star.

The photo agency, which is under no suspicion, confirmed police had been in touch as officers look to identify who was coming in and out of the performer's home.

Although police continue to say the singer's death is being treated as 'non suspicious' there is speculation it could be drug related.

Stowaway crushed to death by Christmas catalogues

A STOWAWAY was found crushed to death inside an HGV trailer carrying a cargo of Christmas catalogues after authorities in France had searched it earlier, an inquest in Maidstone heard this week.

The unidentified Afro-Caribbean man, thought to be in his late 30s, was discovered with his legs protruding beneath the piles of upturned catalogues at the Airport

Service Station in Sellindge, near Ashford on October 18 last year.

A post-mortem examination found the man's death was due to "traumatic compressive asphyxia".

Recording a conclusion of accidental death, assistant coronor Christopher Morris said: "I'm unable to record a name... a poignant tragedy given he was probably somebody's brother, son and friend."



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Farage cuts political hours to host radio show

NIGEL Farage says he is cut his political working week from 100 to 40 hours after landing a daily radio show of political debate with LBC.

The former Ukip leader, who lives in Westerham, will present an hour-long week-night phone-in.

He said the Nigel Farage Show would be "full of opinions, callers and reaction, as well as my nightly

final thought on the events of the day".

The Lib Dems had questioned whether Mr Farage's new job - presented largely from LBC's studios in London - was compatible with his duties as a member of the European Parliament where he represents the south east - prompting Mr Farage to announce he was cutting his working week.



TOUGH: Jamie Oliver

TV chef Jamie to close down restaurant

JAMIE Oliver is to close six Jamie's Italian restaurants as the celebrity chef is hit by a combination of rising Brexit cost pressures and tough trading.

And it will spell the end of his outlet in Tunbridge Wells which opened less than two years ago.

The closures will impact 120 staff, although the company will attempt to place those affected in other parts of Oliver's restaurant empire.

Restaurants in Aberdeen, Cheltenham, Exeter, Ludgate, Richmond (both in London) and Tunbridge Wells are all scheduled to close in the first quarter, the Jamie Oliver Restaurant Group said on Friday. The chain comprises of 42 Jamie's Italian outlets nationwide.

Chief executive Simon Blagden said: "As every restaurant owner knows, this is a tough market and, post-Brexit, the pressures and unknowns have made it even harder.

"While our overall business is in very good shape - we finished last year with like-for-like sales growth and an increase in covers - because we refuse to compromise on the quality and provenance of our ingredients and our commitment to training and developing our staff, we need restaurants that can serve an average of 3,000 covers every week to be sustainable."

Proposal for yet another expansion to our coast's growing wind farm estate

By Chris Britcher

chris.britcher@archant.co.uk

A WIND farm off the Kent coast could be set to be extended by a further 34 turbines.

Vattenfall, the Swedish energy company, has revealed early plans to extend its Thanet Offshore Wind Farm which already boasts 100 of the huge turbines in the sea some 10-15km off Foreness Point.

Now it holding five public information days in Thanet to gauge public opinion.

Helen Jameson, the project director for the expansion scheme, said: "Vattenfall's Kent cluster of offshore wind power has made an important contribution to the Thanet and Kent economy and community.

"We think there is an opportunity to add more green energy capacity to the existing Thanet Offshore Wind Farm to deliver cheap, green, economy boosting electricity.

"We are at the early stages but it's important we understand local peo-



WINDY: Turbines off our coast

ple's concerns and hopes for the extension. We urge people to come along to one of our drop in sessions and ask the specialists on hand about our early plans."

More than 70 people are currently

working at Vattenfall's busy Ramsgate Harbour operations base supporting the three wind farms in the Kent cluster: Thanet, Kentish Flats and Kentish Flats Extension.

As the extension would be considered a major infrastructure investment by planners the planning process will be handled by the Planning Inspectorate and a development consent order (DCO) is required to be granted by the government's energy secretary.

The meetings, which will feature all the plans and have experts on hand to provide further information, take place on January 20 at the Royal Temple Yacht Club in Ramsgate from 2-7pm; then Broadstairs Pavilion on January 21 from 11am to 4pm.

On January 23 it will be at the Walpole Hotel in Cliftonville, Margate, from 2-7pm and on January 26 at The Guildhall in Sandwich from 2-7pm.

The final date is January 28 at Cliffsend Village Hall, also running from 2-7pm.

Jail after stamping on face in nightclub

A PARTY goer who stamped on a man's face, fracturing his jaw in two places, during a vicious assault in a Dartford nightclub, has been sentenced to six years behind bars.

John Jeeves, of Reddy Road, Erith, carried out the assault at the Air and Breathe nightclub in Essex Road, and was sentenced at Maidstone Crown Court this week.

The 22-year-old had pleaded guilty to actual bodily harm with intent in connection with the incident on March 24, 2014.

Following a brawl, Jeeves pulled his victim to the floor and stamped on his face, before punching the same man as he struggled to get to his feet.

His victim was taken to hospital and diagnosed with two fractures to his jaw, which required metal plates to fix as well as the removal of one of his wisdom teeth. Detective constable Matt Lincoln said: "His unprovoked actions show he is a danger to the public and deserves to be behind bars."

TV show Flog It set to film at cathedral

TELEVISION presenter Paul Martin and his Flog It team are set to visit Rochester Cathedral this month.

The antiques programme, which recently filmed its 1,000th episode and regularly achieves an audience of over two million viewers in its weekday afternoon slot, rolls into Medway on January 25 between 9.30am and 4pm.

The cathedral will host the show's valuation day, where members of the public are invited to bring up to three antiques or collectables they might be interested in selling. Once valued the owner and a team of experts decide whether an object is filmed and gets sent to Hop Farm Auctions in Paddock Wood for inclusion in their sale on February 15.

Everyone who goes along to the valuation day at the cathedral will receive a free appraisal of their items - even if their antiques are not chosen for filming and to go forward for auction.

The BBC will be making four editions of the show featuring Rochester Cathedral and they will be transmitted within 18 months of recording.

Deadline nears for primary school spots

PARENTS are being reminded time is running out to submit applications to secure their a place at a primary school in September.

Applications for primary, infant and junior places in Kent schools closes on January 16.

Last year there were 500 late applications out of the 17,400 families needing a school place.

Roger Gough, KCC's cabinet member for education, said: "The best way to apply is online. 94 per cent of all applications are now made that way and we really encourage parents to apply as soon as possible. If parents do not apply in time their child could miss out on a school place at their preferred school."

Every child born between September 1, 2012, and August 31, 2013, needs to be registered for a school place, along with those who are moving from Infant school to junior school.

Families can apply for up to three schools, putting them in order of preference. Allocations will be announced on April 18. To apply online, visit www.kent.gov.uk/ola.

Could nuclear workers be next to strike over pensions row?

By Alan Jones

editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

UNION leaders representing thousands of nuclear workers are to discuss calling a strike ballot in a row over pensions.

The unions said 16,000 workers at 19 sites face cuts under plans by the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority to make savings of £660 million.

The workers are based at Sellafield (Cumbria), Magnox (Anglesey), Ayrshire, Dorset, Dumfriesshire, Essex, Gloucestershire, Gwynedd, Kent, Oxfordshire, Somerset, Suffolk, Direct Rail Services (Cumbria), Dounreay Site Restoration Ltd (Caithness), Low Level Waste Repository (Cumbria) and International Nuclear Services (Cumbria, Warrington).

The unions said the Government's expectation is that the final salary pension schemes in place across the NDA estate will be reformed by April 2018.

Justin Bowden, GMB national officer, said: "There is no justification for this attack on the pensions of these nuclear workers and their communities.

"These pension funds are in a sound state and underwent considerable reform 10 years ago. What the government are saying is that the privatised site license companies who



POWER: Dungeness B power station on the Kent coast

run these nuclear facilities are in fact public sector organisations and therefore Sellafield, Dounreay and the Magnox sites should go through the same reforms as the rest of the public sector itself."

Kevin Coyne, Unite national officer, said: "We are urging all our members working for the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA) to resist this proposed Treasury-led 'raid' on their pensions - if it is allowed to go ahead thousands of workers will see their retirement incomes slashed by thousands of

pounds.

"It is blatantly clear that the NDA is the stalking horse for the government which hell-bent in saving £660 million over the period of decommissioning."

Dai Hudd, Prospect's deputy general secretary, added: "Prospect members are some of the most highly skilled workers in the UK. There can be no justification for these cuts to the future pensions of these workers."

The unions will meet next Monday.

Jailed for 'controlling, coercive' behaviour

JAN Horvath, 36, has been jailed for two years for using 'controlling and coercive' behaviour against his former partner.

Horvath of Tontine Street, Folkestone, pleaded guilty to the crime against a 22-year-old woman from Dover.

He had subjected her to a catalogue of physical and emotional abuse after she moved in with him. He is also subject to a five-year restraining order.

Power cut puts town centre into darkness

HUNDREDS of properties were hit by a power cut in Ashford town centre on Tuesday afternoon.

An underground electricity cable was blamed after it plunged offices and businesses into darkness. Traffic lights on the ring road were also hit. Power went out at around 1pm to around 435 customers and was restored at around 3pm.

Celeb BB for James

STRICTLY Come Dancing star James Jordan found himself back on reality TV this week after entering the Celebrity Big Brother house.

The latest series kicked off the new year with the 38-year-old, who lives with wife and I'm A Celebrity star Ola Jordan in Kings Hill, lining up as one of the famous faces on the Channel 5 show. He has appeared before in the show.


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Experienced appointment to head up ambulance trust

AMBULANCE chiefs have appointed a new chief executive as they look to steady their ship after a traumatic year.

Former chief executive of the South East Coast Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust (SECAmb), Paul Sutton, quit last May after he became embroiled in a controversial scheme used by the trust which delayed sending help to some emergency calls and sparked a major review.

Replaced on an interim basis by Geraint Davies, the role will now be taken over by Daren Mochrie.

With nearly 30 years' experience of working in the NHS in Scotland and currently the director of service delivery for the Scottish Ambulance Service, Mr Mochrie has extensive experience of managing ambulance services in



both rural and urban settings.

He was also the lead for ambulance provision in the 2014 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow as well as being a specialist advisor with the Care Quality Commission.

SECAmb chairman Sir Peter Dixon said: "I'm confident he will provide the necessary leadership to support our recovery."

A start date has yet to be confirmed.

Pogues star mourns loss of his mother in car crash

THE mother of Shane MacGowan, frontman of Irish band The Pogues, has died in a car crash.

Therese MacGowan, 87, spent several years living in Kent and gave birth to the singer at Pembury Hospital in 1957.

She became the first person to die on County Tipperary's roads in 2017 when the car she was driving struck a wall in Ballintoe on New Year's Day, Irish police said.

Ms MacGowan, the car's sole occupant, was pronounced dead at the scene near her home in Silvermines at around 3pm, the force added.

A spokesman for An Garda Síochána, the Republic of Ireland's national police force, said the crash was being treated as an accident.

"It would appear to be a

single car collision with a wall," he added.

Shane MacGowan, best known for his festive hit song Fairytale of New York, was born in Tunbridge Wells before growing up in County Tipperary. He then moved back to England when he was six, and attended Holmewood House prep school in Langton Green.

He once told a newspaper: "I used to learn a song a day from my mother's family, so I built up a huge repertoire. I gave my first performance when I was three. They put me up on the kitchen table to sing and the song went down very well. I did public performances regularly after that. I owe my career entirely to my family and to the way I was brought up. I am very grateful to them."

Chef is 'one to watch'

WEST Malling chef Scott Goss, who works at The Twenty Six restaurant in Southborough, Tunbridge Wells, has been named as one of the top 17 chefs to look out for in 2017 by Olive magazine.

Known as a 'test kitchen' each day's menu is dependant on ingredients.

Lifeboat's dinghy mission

LIFEBOAT crews in Whitstable had to rescue two people in a blue dinghy rowing towards Reculver in choppy seas without any life jackets.

The boat was intercepted off Herne Bay and escorted safely to the shore where the rowers were given safety advice.

Pulse firm in the money

AN international pulse business based in Yalding and bought for just £1 over 20 years ago has been bought out.

Commodities trader and financial services firm ED&F Man has struck a multi-million deal to purchase supplier Maviga.

Abandoned baby arrest

THE mother of a baby abandoned outside the Co-op in Whitstable on Tuesday has been bailed by police until March.

Police were called to the store on Canterbury Road after receiving a report of concern for the welfare of the mother and child.



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Shake-up to repeat prescriptions

Tom Pyman on significant changes to the way we order tablets as a CCG in west Kent starts a pilot scheme tomorrow designed to cut down on the amount of NHS spending on drugs we never use...

HEALTH chiefs in the west of the county are set to roll out a significant change to the way many people order repeat prescriptions directly from their pharmacist in the latest move to save money and ease the financial plight of local healthcare.

The NHS West Kent Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), which plans and buys healthcare for the people of Maidstone, Tonbridge and Malling, Tunbridge Wells and the southern part of Sevenoaks, is trialling a new system next week – starting tomorrow (Monday).

Starting with patients registered at Aylesford Medical Centre and St Andrew's Medical Centre in Southborough, before moving onto other areas, the changes mean patients will now either order prescription medicine from the GP surgery or via a new Prescription Ordering Direct service (POD).

The POD will be accessed via a local number – 01732 375 262 – that is available Monday to Fri-

day, excluding bank holidays, between 8am and 4pm.

The CCG insists it will be a dedicated line staffed by experienced medicines coordinators who will have knowledge of common prescription medicines.

Each time a patient calls they will review each of the patient's medicines with them and discuss the patient's current stock levels to ensure that orders are only placed for items the patient genuinely needs.

The medicines will be collected from or delivered by the pharmacy that the patient nominates each time.

The changes are being introduced to save money and reduce the thousands of pounds wasted every year on medicines that are not needed.

Bob Bowes, chair of West Kent Clinical Commissioning Group, said: "The introduction of a prescription ordering service will help us to cut unnecessary costs and reduce the amount of medicines that are being prescribed that end up in the bin.



COSTS: West Kent chiefs hope the move will help ease budgets

"Many patients order repeat prescriptions directly through their GP and they will not need to do anything different, but GP surgeries cannot take any repeat prescription order over the phone.

"The changes will affect those people that have relied on their pharmacist to reorder medicines for them.

"The money saved by these small changes will be re-invested in other areas of patient care."

£300M COST OF MEDICINES

ACCORDING to campaign group Only Order What You Need, the cost of unused medicines costs the NHS hundreds of millions each year.

It cites a report by the Department of Health which estimates unused medicines cost the NHS around £300 million every year, with an estimated £110m worth of medicine returned to pharmacies, £90m worth of unused prescriptions being stored in homes and £50m worth of medicines disposed of by care homes.

A spokesman added: "These startling figures don't even take into account the cost to patients' health if medicines are not being correctly taken. If medicine is left unused, this could lead to worsening symptoms and extra treatments that could have been avoided.

"Sometimes patients receive medicines they don't actually use, or use only occasionally. This means that they can lose out on the intended health benefits of their prescription.

"The reasons why patients don't take all their medication can vary and audits have shown that around half of all the medication returned had not even been opened. This means that patients are ordering and receiving medication that they don't even start to use.

"By reducing the amount of medicines being wasted each year, we could increase the available funding for other desperately needed health services."

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SQUAD: From left, Steve Lovell, Paul Scally, Ady Pennock, Jamie Day and Neil Withington meet the press on Friday



RETURN: Ady Pennock is a former fan favourite. Pic: Andy Archer

All smiles for Gills as manager's door revolves at speed

Justin Edinburgh started the new year with his P45, and within 48 hours a familiar face was leading a new look team

By Tom Pyman

tom.pyman@archant.co.uk

FORMER Gillingham defender Adrian Pennock says he wants to get Priestfield "rocking and rolling again" after being appointed the club's head coach this week.

It comes after manager Justin Edinburgh was relieved of his duties by Gillingham chairman Paul Scally on Tuesday, after less than two years in the dugout.

A quick turnaround has seen a shift in the management structure at the club, with Mr Scally opting to bring in a trio of coaches rather than a single manager, to focus on day-to-day training.

Jamie Day and Steve Lovell will assist Mr Pennock as he tries to resurrect what has been a disappointing season by the club's expectations.

"I'm delighted to be back, everyone knows what I think of the football

club, and when the chairman gave me a call a couple of days ago it was great," Mr Pennock said.

"I've had some fantastic times here, I've got that rapport with the supporters and long may that continue.

"I spoke to other clubs as well but I couldn't turn this down, it's a great opportunity and I'm excited.

"This is a results business, end of. But at the same time I want to get this place rocking and rolling again, getting bums on seats and making supporters enjoy our football."

Mr Scally confirmed this week the current squad was the most expensive in the club's history and said Monday's loss to Oxford was "the final straw" for Mr Edinburgh.

He told KoS: "I've known Ady as a person for 20 years, so it's not someone I don't know, he's someone I've always thought one day I'll work with, and given I'd been forced into making the change, I looked to the people I felt I could trust and work with immediately.

"I didn't want to appoint a manager I wanted to bring in coaches because the team need coaching, we've got a very good squad but they're crying out for additional work on the training ground, so I've brought in three coaches that complement each other but also bring their own specialities and skills.

"The fact I know and trust Ady is more important than necessarily his history with the club.

"Justin has tried extremely hard to turn things around but the form over the past 12 months has not been as good as expected.

"Nonetheless, Justin is a manager of great ability, and I have no doubt he will go far in football."

With the Gills languishing in 17th, having won just eight games and taken only 30 points from their 25 League One games under the former Tottenham Hotspur defender this season, in addition to two humiliating cup exits, the club's supporters also felt the decision to dismiss Mr Edinburgh was justified.

"Harsher chairmen could have sacked him at the end of last season after our collapse in form," said Daniel Pratt, secretary of the Gills Independent Supporters' Club.

"Edinburgh did himself no favours by his post-match comments, where he claimed that we were 'overachieving' by being in the promotion places, then compounding it by claiming we were still overachieving in 17th position, with a poor record against promoted sides this season.

"I know Ady would get the fans on side, but would he command the respect of the players we have now and

would they learn any defensive tips from him?

"What are his contacts like? The game has changed a lot since he was here but he's a good man, local to the area and he loves the club and understands our fans.

"It's worth giving him a try until the end of the season."

One could argue it was Mr Edinburgh's history with Tottenham and his top level contacts that allowed him to bring in players with Premier League experience such as Paul Konchesky and Jay Emmanuel-Thomas this summer.

However, Mr Scally told us the club still had a strong network and would work hard to move players in and out of the club during this month's transfer window.

"That's not a concern at all, we've got some very top quality contacts throughout the club, it's not a problem," he said.

"I think you'll only need 68, 69, 70 points to make the play-offs this year, so if we could get 40 points out of the remaining 21 games, something we're very capable of given our squad, it's still possible, but we need to get a move on, get out on the training pitch and do some work."

Mr Edinburgh enjoyed some initial success, steering a rocky Gillingham ship to 12th at the end of the 14/15 season - the midtable spot being the

club's highest finish for a decade.

The following campaign saw the Gills transform into genuine promotion candidates, as they topped League One for long periods going into 2016.

A fixture in the top three until the spring, a play-off spot seemed like the very least Edinburgh's side would achieve, with the manager certainly getting the best out of free-scoring Bradley Dack, who would go on to be voted the league's player of the season.

There were whispers of interest from bigger clubs, including the likes of Aston Villa, though Mr Edinburgh insisted he was committed to his Priestfield project.

The manager was vocal in his praise for the way his players bounced back from disappointing results at the start of the new year but suddenly the wheels started to come off.

Just four victories in the second half of the season - the last of which coming at the end of March, meaning they ended the campaign eight games without a win - saw them slide further and further down the table, eventually falling out of the play-offs and finishing a disappointing eighth.

Mr Scally backed his man over the summer by providing significant financial investment but a poor start to the campaign left the chairman with little choice but to dismiss him.



GONE: Justin Edinburgh was shown the door after defeat. Pic: Ady Kerry

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Village pram race future hangs in balance after death tragedy

It is traditionally one of the highlights of a picturesque village's New Year's Day celebrations, but last week the death of a competitor cast a long shadow and threatens its very future. **Tom Pyman** reports

ORGANISERS of the charity pram race during which a man tragically died on New Year's Day have refused to be drawn on speculation this year could be the race's last.

Francis O'Sullivan, 52, known to friends and family as 'Titch', died in hospital on Tuesday morning after falling from a pram during the annual race in Sutton Valence, near Maidstone.

The race, now in its 38th year, sees dozens of locals dress up in fancy dress as teams of three to raise money for charity.

Two members of the team push the third member, named the 'baby', around the village course in a themed pram or go-kart, stopping to drink a half pint of beer at each of the pubs that line the route.

However, Sunday's tragic events have left the future of the race in the balance, with organisers refusing to commit to hosting it again until a police report into Mr O'Sullivan's death has been compiled.

Organiser Lyndon Davies, who has been involved with the event himself for almost two decades, told KoS: "I have no idea [if the event will continue next year]."

"We are still waiting to consult with the police and the other authorities and we wait to see what the report for the coroner brings.

"No decision has been made at the moment - it's still very early days."

The rules of the race, which drew crowds of some 500 people last week, dictate that at all times two team members must be pushing and must be in physical contact with the pram and the ground, no pushers are to ride on the pram, only the 'baby' who must remain in the pram at all times.

The main race consists of one lap of the village circuit 'dry' and the second lap to be 'wet' - meaning a beer is to be drunk at all three pubs, the Queen's Head, King's Head and Clothworkers' Arms - on the second lap.

The circuit begins at The Green, heading east along Lower Road, up Rectory Lane, along Broad Street and High Street returning to The Green along Lower Road.

However, the crash which ultimately killed Mr O'Sullivan, dressed as a Second World War Spitfire fighter pilot, turned the usually cheery atmosphere sour on a dreary Sunday lunchtime.

"I didn't see the actual incident, only the before and after," Mr Davies said.

"It's terrible, the whole place went silent, everyone knew it wasn't good.

"I've been involved for 18 years and apart from a few bumps and bruises I've never experienced anything like it."

Eileen Riden, chair of Sutton Valence parish council, added: "The dreadful thing is this is a family day out.

"Everyone is in total shock, you just don't expect it to happen. We're all very upset, it's absolutely tragic.

"The race has been running for over 30 years and there have never been any problems.

"It's a big, fun event in a lovely hilly village, well-run and well-organised - the whole point is to raise money and it seems to get bigger every year.

"There's always a lovely atmosphere - there's music in the pubs and a barbecue on the village green, it's so much fun and that's why this is just so awful.

"I just hope this won't be the final race because we don't want to see it finish, it would be awful if that was the case."

Officers were called to the High Street in Sutton Valence just after 12.30pm where a 52-year-old man had suffered a serious head injury.

Mr O'Sullivan was airlifted to hospital but died at around 1am on Tuesday morning.

Officers have carried out enquiries into the incident and say there are no suspicious circumstances.

Friends and family took to social



SCENE: The street in Sutton Valence where the tragic accident occurred on New Year's Day. All pictures: PA

media to pay tribute, with Mr O'Sullivan's sister, Jeanette, saying: "To my beautiful brother who has peacefully passed away following a tragic accident.

"Love you always and forever in our thoughts. A great brother, dad and uncle.

"May you sleep tight and smile down on us. Sweet dreams. Love you forever, your family."

Friend Andy Dungate said: "He is not going to come home, nor to our pub where he occasionally worked, but was always a supreme character.

"I just want to say that Titch you will always be a special one off, they ain't going to make them like you any more, give them fun in heaven my friend."

Stacey Beal added: "You will be so incredibly missed by everyone and The George won't be the same without you and that infectious and cheeky grin of yours.

"You made me laugh and smile every time I saw you and 'those stories' we will never forget.

"Have a Guinness for me up there my darling, we will miss you so very very much."

In a statement, the group responsible for organising the event said: "We would like to say on behalf of The Queen's Head Oddfellows Fund (QHOF) members that they wish to offer their sincerest condolences to the family and friends of Francis (Titch) O'Sullivan at this very sad time.

"The police are investigating the circumstances and reporting to the coroner and we expect to be assisting them with these enquiries in the near future. That is all we can say at the



MEMORY: The village, near Maidstone, has mourned the loss of the racer



TRIBUTE: Friends and families paid their respects to tragic 'Titch'

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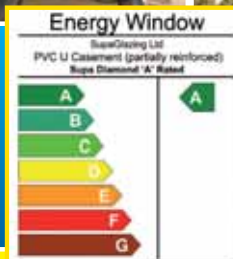
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Arise Sir Julian as MP joins our great and good on honours list

Emily King takes a look at the Olympic heroes, actors, charity workers and politicians who will be heading to Buckingham Palace later this year to collect their gong after they were confirmed as receiving an honour in the annual list...

CANTERBURY MP Julian Brazier told KoS this week he was "delighted and humbled" after being knighted in the New Year Honours' List.

The Conservative politician was one of a number of people from across the county to be recognised in the list, published last weekend.

Sir Julian, who receives his honour for political and public service, was joined by Ashford-born Academy Award-winner Mark Rylance, and chief executive of Care Quality Commission David Behan, from Tunbridge Wells, in receiving a knighthood.

Elsewhere, there was further success for a trio of Kent Olympians. Women's hockey duo Sam Quek and Susannah Townsend and rower Tom Ransley all got an MBE to add to their gold medal haul.

Speaking this week, Sir Julian said: "I see it very much as a team effort. This isn't just for me, it's for my wife and family, my supporters, my constituents and my staff. It's an honour for the whole team, and everyone seems to be pleased.

"The only disappointment is that for years now I have tried and failed to have other people honoured."

Notified in November, after confirming by letter he would like to accept the honour, he said it was only when the media started contacting him when the list was issued that he knew for sure he would be receiving it.

He was first elected to serve the constituency in 1987 and has held the safe seat ever since. He has held numerous government and shadow government posts including membership of the defence select committee, and he was parliamentary under-secretary of state in the Ministry of Defence, with responsibility for the reserve forces until July. He is currently the president of Canterbury Sea Cadets.

He added: "I hope this enables extra leverage for my projects. I've got two big defence projects at the moment including one for personnel in the armed forces, and another that deals with adventure and character training such as Sea Cadets.

"Funnily enough, this won't be my first time at Buckingham Palace, as I went there with the Sea Cadets because the Duke of Edinburgh supports the youth charity."

Mark Rylance's honour came at the end of a remarkable year for the actor who, in February, won an Oscar for best supporting actor in Steven Spielberg's Cold War thriller Bridge of Spies, which also starred Tom Hanks.

Then in May he added a Bafta to his trophy cabinet for his role in BBC drama Wolf Hall – which filmed at Penshurst Place in Tonbridge, and Dover Castle.

Sam Quek's MBE also came in a remarkable year for the gold-medal winner. Not only was she part of the Team GB hockey team which won a sensational gold at Rio last summer, but she then appeared in ITV's reality show I'm a Celebrity; flying out to live with a host of stars in the Australian jungle.

A regular for Holcombe hockey club, she was joined on the list by her Team GB colleagues, among them Canterbury player Susannah Townsend and Holcombe colleagues Maddie Hinch, Shona McCallin and Nicola White.

Ms Quek explained: "This year I achieved my life's ambition of winning an Olympic Gold medal and that hasn't really sunk in and I don't think it ever will.

"However when you open a letter that's been sent to you on behalf of her majesty the Queen inviting you to Buckingham Palace to receive an MBE then it really hits home just how massive an achievement that was."

The women's GB hockey team won its first Olympic gold after defeating defending champions the Netherlands in a dramatic penalty shootout.

She added: "When I look at some of the names in years gone by who have been recognised in the New year's Honours list, people whom I now share something in common with, it makes this award completely overwhelming and very humbling. I feel even more proud to be sharing this moment with my incredible team mates.

"I feel so immensely proud at being awarded an MBE and it caps off an unbelievable 2016 for me personally."

Rower Tom Ransley told KoS he felt 'honoured' and that it was a 'nice surprise' when he was notified in November.

He added: "More importantly though, it's just nice to get recognition for the sport, and to realise that we are appreciated as Olympians and athletes."

Mr Ransley, who was born in Ashford and is a former King's School in Canterbury pupil, has been an Olympic medallist since London 2012, when he won a bronze in the men's eight. It was at Rio 2016 that he was a part of the gold medal-winning men's eight team.

There was also praise for Jonathan Bloomer, from Sevenoaks, and his long role in the children's charity the NSPCC.

He began his involvement back in 1996 as a

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HOST: Those named in the list will be presented with their awards by a senior member of the royal family at a special ceremony at Buckingham Palace

co-opted member of the finance committee and within five years had become a trustee and honorary treasurer of the charity.
Current chairman of the NSPCC Mark Wood said: "We are delighted Jonathan's long service

to the NSPCC has been recognised. He brought expertise and diligence to the charity's financial governance as treasurer, setting exacting standards and ensuring at all times that the charity's endeavours are soundly financed."

Even with his busy professional life, his personal commitments to his wife Judy and their children in Sevenoaks and his work with other charities, Mr Bloomer regularly attended NSPCC trustee and committee meetings where he delivered

shrewd advice and wise counsel. He stepped down from the trustee board in October 2016 following eight years loyal service and is now in his 20th year as an NSPCC supporter.

Continued on page 16



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 ■ Dr Jonathan Clark, from Edenbridge, for services to children with special educational needs and disabilities.
 ■ Carol McCall, from Sevenoaks, for services to government civil contingency preparation and ceremonial planning.
 ■ Jonathan Tibbs, from Tunbridge Wells, for services to international trade and the sports sector.
 ■ Caroline Wake, from Tonbridge, for services to transport safety and the community in Kent.

MBES

■ Capt Donald Cockrill, from Faversham, for voluntary services to maritime pilotage and the port industry.
 ■ Terry Cole, from Sevenoaks, for parliamentary service.
 ■ Michael Conway, from Sevenoaks, for services to UK construction infrastructure support and road safety.
 ■ Arjuna Fernando, from Sevenoaks, for service to the digital economy.
 ■ John Schoner, from Hythe, for services to the community.

■ Robert Simpson for services to the UK's audio-visual industry.

■ Louise Upton, from Canterbury, for services to children.

■ Ronald Upton, from Canterbury, for services to children.

■ Austin Walker, from Margate, for voluntary service to veterans and their families.

■ Barbara Walsh, from Gravesend, for services to public administration and to the community of Kent.

■ Ronald Woodward, from Herne Bay, for services to Age UK and the community.

■ Dr Cheryl Mvula, from Whitstable, for services to responsible tourism, community development, and conservation in Africa.

■ Susan Polydorou for services to the community in Bexley and Bromley.

■ Sharon Holness, from Folkestone, for voluntary services through the National Police Memorial Day.

■ Dr Howard Leicester, from Otford, for services to improving patient services in the NHS.

BEMS (BRITISH EMPIRE MEDAL)

■ Pirthipal Singh Kang, from Gravesend, for services to fire and rescue awareness and community cohesion in north

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■ Baljinder Singh Rana, of the Guru Nanak Football Club, for services to football and inclusion in Kent.

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PROPOSALS: Above and below, artist's impression of how the development on the former quarry sites will look

Garden city to play role in starter home scheme

Ebbsfleet development is to benefit to the tune of £31.6m in government funding to help build discounted homes to let young on property ladder

By Chris Britcher

chris.britcher@archant.co.uk

EBBSFLEET Garden City has been confirmed as one of the 30 areas to spearhead a £1.2billion scheme to see discounted starter homes built for young, first-time buyers.

It follows an announcement earlier this week by housing minister Gavin Barwell which is designed to breathe new life into the housing market and allow youngsters to get their feet on the property ladder.

The minister said 2017 will see the first phase of starter homes being built on brownfield sites in areas around England – among them the already announced garden city development plans in Ebbsfleet.

However, Labour said building the new homes was three years overdue and warned that they would be unaffordable for many young people.

The houses will be available exclusively to first-time buyers aged between 23 and 40 at a discount of at least 20 per cent below market value, with a cap of £450,000 in London and £250,000 outside.

It is understood the new starter homes will form part of the government's target to build 400,000 new affordable homes.

Mr Barwell said: "This government is committed to building starter homes to help young first-time buyers get on the housing ladder.

"This first wave of partnerships shows the strong local interest to build thousands of starter homes on hundreds of brownfield sites in the coming years.

"One in three councils has expressed an interest to work with us so far."

The first 30 local authorities have been selected on the basis of their potential to build the homes quickly and the partnerships have been established under the government's £1.2bn starter homes land fund (see box).

It is hoped the new developments will support wider growth and regeneration, including in some town centres.

The first areas will begin construction later this year along with sites supported by the Homes and Communities Agency.

Up to 635 starter homes could be created across the Ebbsfleet Garden City and will include homes in a newly-created city centre as well as on Northfleet Riverfront.

Paul Spooner, interim chief executive of the Ebbsfleet Development Corporation (EDC) – an organisation set up by government to speed up delivery of up to 15,000 homes, said: "EDC is pleased to be one of the government's new priority areas for starter homes with up to £31.6m for Ebbsfleet Garden City.

"The development of the garden city is well under way with 600 houses on target to be built this year and EDC is keen to ensure that the widest possible range of housing is developed to meet needs.



"The starter homes initiative will provide the opportunity for more people to get on to the housing ladder and we will be targeting this additional resource on bringing forward new sites for development, working closely with our landowners and developers who are all committed to the garden city's success."

But shadow housing secretary John Healey said: "These so-called 'starter homes' are a symbol of the Conservative record on housing.

"Ministers launched them in 2014 but will only start to build the first in 2017; promised they'd be affordable for young people when they'll cost up to £450,000; and pledged to build 200,000 by 2020 but no-one now believes that's possible."

Shelter's director of communications, policy and campaigns Roger Harding said: "Efforts to build more homes are welcome but these starter homes are only likely to benefit people who are better off

and already close to buying.

"Sadly they will do little to help the many millions of people on middle and low incomes who need somewhere genuinely affordable to buy or rent long term."

To secure most mortgages, lenders will cap loans at four and a half times your income.

And that would mean affording a £250,000 would require an income in excess of £50,000.

The Local Government Association (LGA) called for councils to be given discretion on how many starter homes are needed in new developments to ensure enough homes to both buy and rent are available at affordable prices.

LGA housing spokesman Martin Tett said: "If we are to stand any chance of solving our housing crisis, it must recognise that a renaissance in housebuilding is essential to ensure more of the genuinely affordable homes that our communities desperately need are built."

WHAT IS THE STARTER HOME LAND FUND?

LAST January, then-prime minister David Cameron announced some £1.2bn of a £2.3bn cash pot revealed in the autumn statement to support the creation of 60,000 starter homes, would create a starter home land fund.

That money was designed to prepare brownfield sites to create 30,000 starter homes by 2020.

It would see land acquired and prepared for housing – absorbing many of the off-putting high costs of such moves which put developers off.

Money generated from the subsequent sale of the land to private developers will then, the government says, be used to support the delivery of more starter homes.

EBBSFLEET GARDEN CITY

ANNOUNCED in 2014 by then-chancellor George Osborne during an appearance on a politics TV show, the Ebbsfleet Garden City plan aims to transform brownfield sites – predominantly former quarries – across an area that straddles the boundaries of Gravesham and Dartford.

The aim is to create 15,000 homes and all the supporting infrastructure to go with it – from business and leisure facilities to schools and health provision.

Key is the Ebbsfleet International station – offering fast access to London and mainland Europe – which sits at the heart of the transport provision for the area.

At the heart will be the garden city, which effectively means a city where landscaping and public space is key to the designs, with some eight new 'urban villages' satellites around it.



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Week ending January 8, 2017 **19**

Bowie bandstand battle goes on, a year after icon's death

Tuesday will mark the first anniversary of the death of one of music's legends...

By Luke May

luke.may@archant.co.uk

ATEMPTS to renovate a bandstand made famous by a legendary free concert performed by David Bowie are still less than half way towards their target as preparations to make a renewed application for lottery funding continue.

The site at Croydon Road Recreation Ground, Beckenham, became part of Bowie folklore when the performer played there in August, 1969.

The free show was part of the Beckenham Arts Lab movement in which the star played an active role and was immortalised in the song Memory of a Free Festival – recorded just a month after the show and reworked and released as a single the following year.

Legend has it the singer also started penning the lyrics to classic Life on Mars at the site.

Campaigners have been working to get the Victorian bandstand renovated since 2013, when they first set up a

festival to help raise money for the cause.

In the summer, the Bowie Beckenham Oddity event managed to raise £16,000 on top of the £18,000 raised from previous concerts.

But Bromley Council says it is still some way off its £120,000 target, raising £52,000 from various means including selling personalised Bowie Bricks – giving fans the chance to leave a permanent message carved in stone on the bandstand as part of the renovation work.

In addition, it was delivered a blow when it missed out on a bid for Heritage Lottery funding.

Now, however, work is under way on a renewed bid with hopes the huge wave of emotion for the performer will help carry it to success.

Colin Smith is deputy leader of Conservative-run Bromley Council.

He explained: "A future bid is already being considered. But we are taking our time to make sure the application for funding, whether it's Heritage Lottery or English Heritage is a good as it can be.

"We're determined to have a fitting



TRIBUTE: Flowers left last year, and right, inset, Bowie on the bandstand

tribute to Bowie and are working toward getting the renovations in place.

"Right now it is progressing at a more evolutionary speed rather than a big bang, but that could all change overnight if we received some big news."

The Bickley ward councillor said some corporate parties had expressed interest in creating a further tribute to the Starman, but said he could reveal no more at this stage.

It comes in the week that fans and friends of the late singer will mark the first anniversary of his death.

The performer, best known for his

pioneering fashions, blurring of sexual identity and hits such as Life on Mars, Heroes and Ashes to Ashes, died on January 10 last year in New York.

He had been battling cancer – an illness he revealed only to those closest to him.

His death prompted an enormous outpouring of grief by generations influenced by him. And that was felt keenly in Kent – the county in which he grew up and which played such a significant role in his life.

Among events taking place will be a special show at Ravensbourne School – where the performer attend-

ed when it was known as Bromley Technical High School.

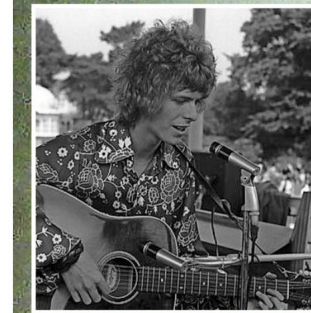
Performed by a host of local musicians, it will run through a showcase of some of David Bowie's biggest hits.

David Wright helped form Bowie Oddity which will be performing.

He explained: "I realised myself and a lot of the musicians I play with are all massive Bowie fans.

"We started organising this a while ago and we thought how about having it at his old school? It said they didn't normally do gigs like this but they would for him.

"In a way this gig is a proper tribute – we're not doing this for a career or



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to make money, it's just a one night to celebrate his career and memory."

His mother, Margaret 'Peggy' Burns, was born in Southborough, Tunbridge Wells, in 1913, and met David's father, Haywood 'John' Jones, in the cafe of the Ritz cinema in the spa town, where she worked as an usherette.

The Ritz would later become the ABC then the Odeon cinema – and was demolished just two years ago.

They married and lived in Brixton where, in 1947, the young superstar in waiting, then simply David Jones, was born. They moved to Bromley in 1953.

The family would live there until 1965, with the young David attending Burnt Ash Junior school, before he failed his 11-plus and went to Bromley Technical College.

It was here that his musical career and love of performance began, with junior school providing a chance for him to join the choir and music and dance classes.

As a teenager, he became entranced by American stars like Elvis Presley, Fats Domino and Little Richard after listening to singles of his father's.

At the age of 15 he formed his first band. The Konrads performed locally,

with shows in the likes of Bromley, Chislehurst, Biggin Hill, Orpington and West Wickham, before he announced he was leaving school to become a pop star.

He then had a short-lived career with the King Bees, before he joined Maidstone group the Manish Boys, where he admitted he dreamed of emulating Dartford rocker Mick Jagger [the two would later duet on the charity hit Dancing in the Streets in 1985].

He lived in the county town, Maidstone, for a short while, but in an interview with a fansite he remembered receiving a beating as he walked



HISTORIC: Bandstand as it looked last summer for fundraising show

down the street. He said: "It was just this big Herbert. He knocked me down on the pavement and when I fell down, he proceeded to kick me for no reason that I can fathom to this day. I haven't got many good memories of Maidstone."

With an increasing desire to make it big, he then joined The Lower Third, a Margate band which had a regular slot in a Cliftonville hotel, before he moved on to front The Buzz and then Riot Squad, ditching his surname in the mid-60s to replace it with Bowie; after the American frontiersman.

He had feared Davie Jones was too similar to Davy Jones of the Monkees.

By 1969, he released Space Oddity to coincide with the Moon landings, and went from performing in Beckenham folk club to enjoying his first major commercial hit.

The rest, as they say, is history.

He performed in Kent only once more; in Chatham for Ziggy Stardust's farewell tour of 1973 – an album considered his seminal work and for which he will surely be most remembered.

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Week ending January 8, 2017 **21**

What is town's history? Put answers on a postcard please

Fascinating collection of images chart the changing face of Sittingbourne...

By Adele Couchman

adele.couchman@archant.co.uk

THE power of the humble postcard has once again been harnessed by a local author – this time to chart the remarkable history and transformation of Sittingbourne.

The collection of once hugely popular forms of communication allow a fascinating glimpse into the past and the industrial heritage which shaped the town.

Sittingbourne: The Postcard Collection is the latest addition to Robert Turcan's string of 14 books documenting Kent's towns throughout the ages.

It provides a snapshot of the industries which shaped the town over the centuries and how the town morphed from being a popular stop on the pilgrims route from London to Canterbury to one of the county's industrial powerhouses.

Explains retired fund manager Mr Turcan, an avid collector of books, postcards and old photographs:

"Postcards really are a rich source of what it was like back then.

"They became popular during Edwardian times, and millions of them were sent everyday – they were the equivalent to today's email.

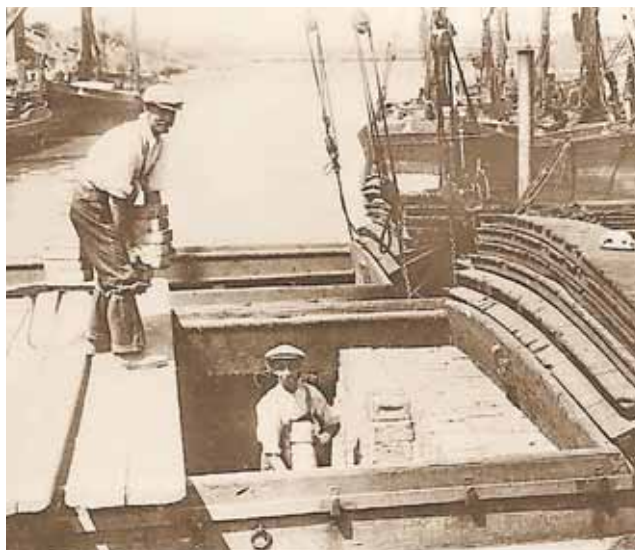
"Postcards were very cheap, and back when the postal system was booming people would be able to send them back and forth in one day locally.

"They were mainly used by poor people, who couldn't afford telephones."

The postcards certainly provide a fascinating – if somewhat sanitised version of a town which has always had an industrial backbone since it started to emerge in Victorian times, due to the arrival of the railway linking it with London and the east Kent ports.

From scenes from the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, to snapshots of the transformation of the town centre, it provides a glimpse into its past.

The town itself was once dwarfed by neighbouring Milton Regis, which benefited by its creek giving access to



WATER: Barges served as vital transport from the town up the Thames

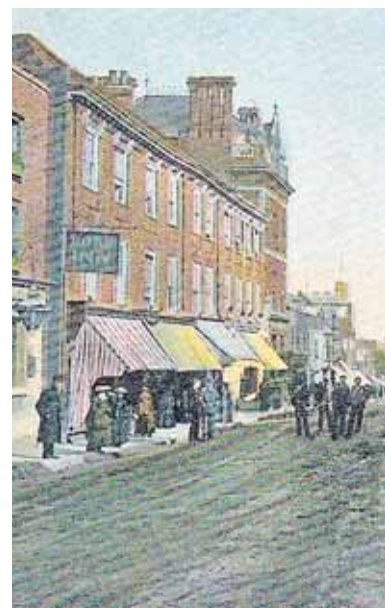
the sea and thus a popular settlement site dating back potentially thousands of years.

But Sittingbourne started to take shape and grow as pilgrims started to travel from London to Canterbury to pay respects to murdered Archbishop

of Canterbury, Thomas Becket following his death in 1170. A convenient halfway house, it became popular for those wanting to rest en route.

It is even mentioned in The Canterbury Tales.

St Michael's Church, which is still a



major landmark at the bottom of the High Street, was first built in the 13th century and proved popular with travellers. It's role through the years is captured in the book.

Established as a coach town, it would be in the 19th century when its fortunes really picked up.

The railway not only generated jobs and transport links, but opened up avenues of commerce to the townsfolk.

Explains Mr Turcan: "Neighbouring Milton Regis was the main town, and Sittingbourne only really grew up once the railway line was established in the 1850s.

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"Sittingbourne's heavy industries really took off when the track was brought in and heavy goods were transported up to London. Before then, it was mainly a coaching stop."

It was the town's creeks which also played such a key role and with the railway, ensured it grew quickly.

A thriving barge-building industry grew to help service the town's industries such as bricks, cement and paper.

Paper manufacturing had first taken place in the town in Tudor times, but boomed with the advent of the railway, allowing it to supply the de-

mands of Fleet Street. In 1912, for example, Sittingbourne Paper Mill was the largest producer of newsprint in the world. It closed in 2006 but nearby Kemsley Paper Mill ensures the tradition lives on in the digital age.

Fruit from the surrounding agricultural land was also transported into the capital down the Thames.

Today the wharfs and quays around Milton and Sittingbourne creeks stand lonely and derelict, but a snapshot of what they were once like is captured in the postcard book.

Concludes Mr Turcan: "Today, the town is mainly a commuter town

with vast growing housing estates and most people working in London.

"The main industries that have survived are secondary – like manufacturing and assembly line jobs – and there are now lots of industrial and retail estates where many of the town's brickfields used to be.

"But Sittingbourne still remains at the centre of the fruit growing trade, where it is renowned for good local farms, good climate and good soil."

■ Sittingbourne: The Postcard Collection is available now, priced £14.99 and published by Amberley.

CHANGES: Transformed over the years and, above, former brickworks



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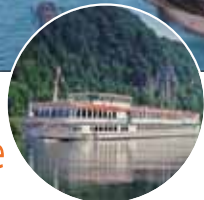
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WICKED: Emma Hatton has just finished wowing audiences as the lead in West End hit *Wicked* and now she's set to play Eva Perón

Legendary Evita announces award-winning musical cast

Bill Kenwright's 2017 production will make its debut on stage in Bromley...

It has been lauded as one of the greatest pieces of musical theatre to have graced our stages and the momentum of *Evita* shows no sign of slowing as it comes to Kent this summer, following its debut in Bromley this January.

Bill Kenwright again produces this musical, written by Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice.

Evita tells the story of Eva Perón, wife of former Argentine dictator Juan Perón. It follows Eva's journey from humble beginnings through to extraordinary wealth, power and iconic status which ultimately lead her to be heralded as the 'spiritual leader of the nation' by the Argentine people.

With more than 20 major awards to its credit, and an Oscar winning film version starring Madonna and Antonio Banderas, *Evita* is iconic.

Featuring some of the best loved songs in musical theatre, including *Don't Cry for Me Argentina*, *On This Night of a Thousand Stars*, *You Must Love Me*, and *Another Suitcase in Another Hall*, this spectacular production promises once again to be the theatrical event of the year.

Taking on the iconic role of Eva Perón will be Emma Hatton.

She recently finished wowing audiences in the lead role of *Elphaba* in the West End's production of *Wicked*. Prior to this she performed the principle roles of *Scaramouche* and *Meat in We Will Rock You*, and *Donna* in the West End production of *Dreamboats and Petticoats*.

This show's debut next week won't be Ms Hatton's first time in Bromley as she tells KoS: "I have really nice memories of Bromley because when I did *Dreamboats and Petticoats* it

also debuted there. It'll be really nice to return to somewhere familiar."

Having hit the 'big time' in 2009, this is Ms Hatton's first leading role on a Bill Kenwright production, but she hopes she's taking the iconic role in her stride.

"Eva Perón was a role I always had in my sights, and every role has been special to me, but I feel honoured and privileged to play her," she adds.

"Usually the characters I play are fictional, so taking on the role of someone in history has a different responsibility. I'm telling a really accurate part of history."

When asked to describe the production in three words, Ms Hatton claims it's "gritty, educational, and eye-opening."

"I want to challenge people's misconceptions about who Eva was,

and in reality, I want them to be on the fence about whether or not they like her when they leave the show."

"I'd love them to feel like they've witnessed a traditional story, but from a fresh, modern perspective. I don't want them to see it as just an old musical from 30 years ago."

With rehearsals fully underway, and debut night fast approaching, the actress' nerves are beginning to show, but she comments: "If you're not nervous, you don't care. I think nerves are a really important part of the job. I just need to go out there and do my job to the best of my ability. Everything else is out of my control."

The show is coming to Bromley's Churchill Theatre from January 12 to 14, and also Dartford's Orchard Theatre from May 30 to June 3.

For tickets, visit churchilltheatre.co.uk or orchardtheatre.co.uk

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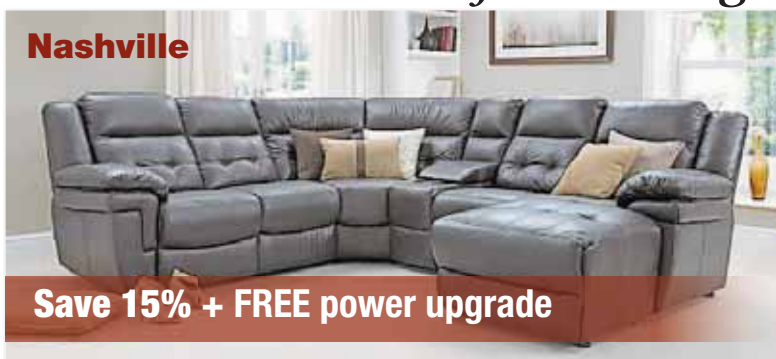
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Secret of Bones presenter to reveal truth about dinosaurs

By Emily King
emily.king@archant.co.uk

ALL the things you thought you knew about dinosaurs are probably wrong – instead of being green and scaly, they actually almost all had feathers and instead of making terrifying, ferocious roars, they sounded more like garden birds.

This is according to David Attenborough's right-hand-man Ben Garrod, who is heading to the Orchard Theatre on February 17 to show kids how wacky and wild dinosaurs really were.

So You Think You Know About Dinosaurs? plans to be a hands-on, fun-filled show for the whole family.

The wildlife expert will give kids the chance to shout out what they already know and discover new strange dinosaur sights and sounds. From the longest, to the smallest, the tallest to the shortest, creepiest to cutest, he will have kids' heads spinning with weird and wonderful stats and facts.

He said: "We have all at some point had a fascination with dinosaurs or thought they're pretty



FASCINATING: Ben Garrod wants to teach families all about dinosaurs with recent scientific studies

cool. I want to give families the chance to take everything they thought they knew about these ancient animals and discover the truth. We'll be using the most recent and up to date studies to give audiences as many amazing and cool facts as we can.

"I have done talks where kids will stick up their hands and ask me questions I don't know the answer to so maybe

I'll learn something too."

The scientist is best known for co-presenting the BBC One show Attenborough and the Giant Dinosaur with the legendary presenter, however, he has also presented his own six-part show called the Secrets of Bones on BBC Four.

The show looked at how bones have enable vertebrates to colonise and dominate practically every habitat on Earth.

The skeleton builder stated of the show: "Part of the fun when building skeletons is that there are no rules."

Since his time on TV Mr Garrod has delivered a TEDx talk and was a speaker at the Cheltenham Science Festival. He also writes scientific articles for The Guardian and The Conversation.

To book tickets, visit orchardtheatre.co.uk or call 01322 220000.

Fascinating Keane's solo

FASCINATING Aida's Dillie Keane is bringing her solo show to Tunbridge Wells' Trinity Theatre on March 31, and Margate's Theatre Royal on April 28. Visit trinitytheatre.net or theatreroyal.com for tickets.



Leeds Castle attractions

OPEN every day of the year, Leeds Castle has much for visitors and guests to do in 2017 from formal gardens to falconry, and dog collars to dancing.

For more information on Leeds Castle attractions, activities and events visit the website leeds-castle.com

Zippo's Cirque Berserk

COMBINING circus skills with stunt action, Cirque Berserk is a danger-filled spectacle that arrives at Bromley's Churchill Theatre on January 18.

For tickets, visit churchill-theatre.co.uk



Hardy visit Danson House

ACTOR Tom Hardy and producer Ridley Scott have joined forces for TV series, Taboo, some of which was filmed at Bexley's Danson House.

Tom Hollander, Jonathan Pryce, Oona Chaplin and Mark Gatiss are among co-stars.

Taboo premiered on BBC One last night (January 7).



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19th February
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The Tuesdays' charity choir

TENTERDEN choir The Tuesdays are inviting music lovers to join them as they help raise funds for Pilgrim's Hospice on January 28. Visit makeyourvoicecount.club to register.



First World War solo play

THE UNKNOWN Soldier will be at the Theatre Royal Margate on February 3.

It is a solo piece that looks at the First World War from a new perspective, through the eyes of a man who has survived the carnage but remains to help build the great cemeteries.

For tickets, visit theatreroyalmargate.com

Anita Harris showbiz tour

LEGENDARY star Anita Harris is accompanied by pianist Peter Gill on her solo tour coming to Sheppey's Little Theatre on February 25.

For tickets, call Sheppey Glass on 01795 665700.



Strictly's Pasha tours on

WINNER of Strictly Come Dancing 2014, Pasha Kovalev, tours once again with his show Let's Dance The Night Away, which he is bringing to Folkestone's Leas Cliff Hall on April 5.

The dancer won with partner Caroline Flack having appeared on the show for three years.

For tickets, visit ticketmaster.co.uk

Tenterden Folk Festival launches funding plea

By Emily King

emily.king@archant.co.uk

ORGANISERS of one of Kent's most popular folk festivals are launching a crowd-funding campaign in a bid to add "bigger and better" entertainment than previous years.

Tenterden Folk Festival will be celebrating its 25th anniversary in 2017. In the year leading up to it, planners are launching a crowd-funding campaign which will give businesses, organisations, and local people the opportunity to add to the festival.

Crowdfunding will allow the venture to raise many small amounts of money from a large number of people, and is generally done via the internet. Funders usually either receive an award, such as concert tickets, or gifts – St Alban's Odyssey cinema crowd-funded £1 million in three months for renovation purposes and local people who donated received cinema tickets.

The festival event planners have said: "Options will start from an easily affordable level to make it



possible for every one to join in. There will be more generous options for those who can afford it and want to offer more support to the 25th Tenterden Folk Festival. All participants in the campaign will be listed in the festival programme."

Organisers added: "We want to make this weekend extra special with more guests, more events, more venues, more Morris sides, more street entertainers, more free events and more for everyone to enjoy, but we do not want to

drastically increase ticket prices."

Tenterden known as "The Jewel of the Weald" attracts up to 50 dance teams. Most teams are Morris dancers from the Cotswold tradition and Black-faced Border style, to clog to garland dancers. It's not just Morris dancers. Tenterden hosts teams performing dances from Scotland, Ireland, England, Slovakia and the Appalachian Mountains of North America.

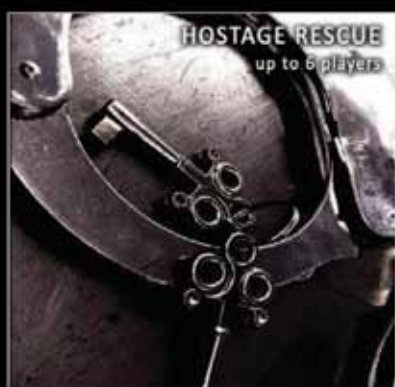
The festival will run from October 5 to 8.



FUN: Last year's opening procession



ENTERTAINERS: Mike Wilson and Damian Barber



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CAN YOU ESCAPE IN TIME



A guide on how to grow apple trees in a pot

Hannah Stephenson has created this guide to tree growing in a plant pot rather than the ground...

WHETHER you're into a crisp crunch, a sweet, juicy flavour or the tart tang that makes a crumble or pie a des- sert to savour, the apple is among the gardener's favourite.

We grow more apples both commercially and in the garden than any other fruit tree. But you don't have to have a massive space to get to the core of success, because you can grow apples in pots, although you'll need to give them more TLC than you would to trees in the ground.

Pot-grown trees may produce fewer fruit than those grown in the ground, but they can be grown on paved areas and courtyards in the smallest gardens.

Free-standing trees or upright cordons are best for growing this way, trained as pyramid or bush trees. Dwarf pyramids are conical in shape and trained to produce tiers of branches all the way up the main trunk, starting around 60cm above the soil surface.

Cordons are vertical 'poles' with short branching spurs along their length. Similarly, 'minarette' fruit trees, slender, columnar trees, bear their fruits on short spurs all the way up a vertical stem rather than on long, spreading branches.

Six to eight feet tall (1.8m-2.4m) when mature, minarettes are perfect for container growing, and can be planted as close as two to three feet apart in open soil.



DIFFERENT: This is ideal for smaller gardens

Apples on dwarfing rootstocks such as M26 or M9 can be grown in large tubs or pots (38-45cm diameter) filled with John Innes No. 3 compost. These rootstocks keep the tree small and slow-growing, as well as bringing it into cropping early on in life, which means you may be picking your first apples within two years of planting.

Fill the pot to a level where the graft union of the fruit tree will be above the surface of the compost once it is planted. You will need to anchor a thick bamboo cane into the bottom of the container to support the tree.

You will also need to make sure the container is stable since, it can act like a sail and get blown over in a strong wind, potentially damaging

both the tree and the container.

The RHS recommends the following culinary apples for growing in containers: 'Arthur Turner', 'Bountiful', and 'Howgate Wonder', while its dessert apple recommendations include 'Alkmene', 'Discovery', 'Falstaff' and 'Fiesta'.

According to fruit tree specialists Ken Muir it may be tempting to put a small plant into a large container straight away, but this is not advisable, as the volume of compost in relation to the roots is too great to create water movement and air circulation through the soil, which will result in stagnant compost and may in turn cause root death.

The vital thing is to keep container-grown trees well-watered.

Canterbury Festival '17

CANTERBURY FESTIVAL 2016 saw 65,000 people visit, with events produced by 2,874 artists, and organisers have said that this year's festival will be even 'bigger and better'.

Last year saw artists such as Tchaikovsky Symphony Orchestra of Moscow and Australian circus company Circa perform.

The festival will take place from October 14 to November 4.

NHS campaign photos

LONDON-BASED photographer Marion Macalpine is bringing her photographic exhibition about the 'corporate take-over of the NHS' to Whitstable.

How Come We Didn't Know? will run at the Fishlab Gallery, Oxford Street, from January 18 - 24 (10am-5.30am), and there will be a special viewing taking place on Saturday January 21 from 1pm-4pm, where visitors can meet Ms Macalpine.

Amateur Cinderella

FORGE Singers Amateur Dramatics next production is Cinderella, a traditional pantomime with fun for all the family, and will take place at Edenbridge's WI Hall from January 26-28.

Tickets are available from Eden Lettings and Sales, and are priced at £9 for adults, and £7 for children. A family ticket is also available for £28 (two adults plus two children).

Chubby's 40th year

COMEDIAN Roy "Chubby" Brown, is set to entertain audiences with new dates added to his 40th anniversary tour, which will stop at Margate's Winter Gardens on February 10 and Bromley's Churchill Theatre on February 16.

Mr Brown regularly tests the taboo and flirts with the forbidden.

For tickets, visit margatewintergardens.co.uk or churchilltheatre.co.uk



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PUZZLES

DOUBLE CROSSWORD

1		2		3		4		5		6		7
8								9				
10						11						
						12						
						13				14		
										15		
16										17	18	
										19		
20										21		
22										23		

Quick

- Across
1. Hurl (5)
4. Blow up (7)
8. Assemble (5,2)
9. Occurrence (5)
10. Simple (4)
11. Ominous (8)
13. Timber (4)
14. Happy (4)
16. Pottery (8)
17. Destruction (4)
20. Memorise (5)
21. Offence (7)
22. Withdraw (7)
23. Expel (5)
- Down
1. Vertical (13)
2. Tie up (5)
3. Conceal (4)
4. Weaken (6)
5. Pliant (8)
6. Avoided (7)
7. Hospitality (13)
12. Begin (8)
13. Voucher (7)
15. Exonerate (6)
18. Custom (5)
19. Competent (4)

Cryptic

- Across
- 1 and 11Ac. What the starchy judge hands down? (5,8)
4. Wildly she raps celestial beings (7)
8. In ruined castle I will return after a stretch (7)
9 and 23Ac. Seventy-five cent of the traps there in need of adjustment (5,5)
10. What one is expected to do for a levy (4)
11. See 1 Across.
13. A place to lie and cheat in the examination (4)
14. See 18 Down.
16 and 3Dn. Offering a challenge to Destiny? (8,4)
17. A thug, we hear, was once collared by this! (4)
20. Manage to keep away from Dave returning to the East (5)
21. Shorten a means of getting to the other side (7)
22. Provide enough to convince (7)
23. See 9 Across.
- Down
1. Following change of dates, speed shows firm resolution (13)
2. Unsuitable variety of paint (5)
3. See 16 Across.
4. Put in a container and fired (6)
5. In which people duly take turns (8)
6. Father's enclosing tenancy payment for himself and mother! (7)
7. They handle all sorts of properties (5,8)
12. I'd put up with the strain of anguish (8)
13. Agreement found in lady's handbag (7)
15. In a gun war you may be caught napping (6)
18 and 14 Ac. Certainly not champions at Crufts! (9)
19. Keep a tight hold on the travelling bag (4)

CODEWORD

This puzzle has no clues. Instead, every number printed in the grid represents a letter, with the same number always representing the same letter. For example, if 8 turns out to be a V, you can write in V wherever a square contains 8. Using your knowledge of words, complete the puzzle.

		17		6			15		2	20	25	10	2
17	8	19	3	12	15	17	24				8		
	11		25			8		3	2	25	18	19	
2	21	3	24	14	13	15	17	4					3
		24				14			25		23		11
4	8	10	12	21	16	2		21	23	8	16	2	
			15			3				15			
10	17	25	1	8		11	15	7	25	11	3	11	
15		18		22			17				18		
2			22	25	17	8	13	21	17	20	2		
24	13	25	26	8		15			5		25		
	14			26		17	8	11	15	25	18	2	
9	21	25	18	24		8			12		4		

A
B
C
D
E
F
G
H
I
J
K
L
M
N
O
P
Q
R
S
T
U
V
W
X
Y
Z

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
										M		
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
	A											

Arrowword

Part of a play Franz... composer	Centre European country	Brave person Waist tie	Breeding animal
Food such as the potato			Shooting weapon
Generated	Pitcher	Nobleman Fairy tale monster	
			Decline
Wiggle, like a dog's tail Awful		Young newt	Father... TV sitcom
Type of cereal		Place for sleep	

Enter your answers in the direction indicated by the arrows.

Battleships

Find where ships shown below are hidden in the grid. The numbers to the right of and below the grid indicate how many of the squares in that row are filled in with ships or parts of ships. The ships do not touch each other, even diagonally. Some of the squares have been filled to start you off.

THE FLEET
1 x Battleship
2 x Cruiser
3 x Destroyer
4 x Submarine



	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
A	●										3
B											1
C											3
D			●								1
E							●				4
F											0
G											2
H										●	2
I											3
J											1
	2	2	4	1	1	5	1	2	1	1	

Word Spiral

1			2			3
		9			10	
8					11	4
					16	
					12	
7				6		5

Starting from 1, fill in the grid clockwise with four-letter words. The last letter of each word becomes the first letter of the next to reveal the key word in the shaded boxes.

1. Shove
2. Parsley, say
3. Farm building
4. Fastening device
5. Quiet period
6. Heather
7. Sullen
8. Dairy product
9. County
10. Grow weary
11. Cupid
12. Cosy
13. Snatch
14. Be on fire
15. Tidings
16. Pronounce unclearly

Keyword clue: A girl's name

SUDOKU

Hard

		7	2				5
5				7	9		3
	3					8	
		3					1
		8	9		4	5	
1					2		
		2					5
	1		6	2			8
4				7	6		

Easy

	8	2		1			5
	7	3		4	9		1
1			5			8	3
3				5		9	
	5		9		8		2
		6		3			4
9	6	7			2		3
	3			8		2	
8		7			1		6

Solutions

23 Eject. Down: 1
Cryptic
Across: 1 Stiff: 4
Double Crossword
Serpents: 8 Elastic: 9 Three: 10 Duly: 11 Sentence: 13 Crisp: 14 Dogs: 16 Tempting: 17 Ruff: 20 Evade: 21 Warrant: 15 Acquit: 18 Usage: 19 Able. Codeword
1=Z, 2=S, 3=U, 4=D, 5=Y, 6=Q, 7=X, 8=E, 9=J, 10=P, 11=M, 12=L, 13=W, 14=H, 15=A, 16=Y, 17=R, 18=N, 19=G, 20=K, 21=O, 22=F, 23=B, 24=T, 25=L, 26=C. Word Spiral
1 Push: 2 Herb: 3 Barn: 4 Nail: 5 Lull: 6 Ling: 7 Glum: 8 Milk: 9 Kent: 10 Tire: 11 Eros: 12 Snug: 13 Grad: 14 Burn: 15 News: 16 Slur. Keyword: Maureen

Umbrage: 22 Retreat: 21 Ruin: 20 Learn: 21 Glad: 16 Ceramics: 14 Sinister: 13 Wood: 11 Event: 10 Easy: 11 Initiate: 8 Round up: 9 Across: 1 Pitch: 4 Sacked: 5 Rotation: 2 Inapt: 3 Fate: 4 1=Z, 2=S, 3=U, 4=D, 5=Y, 6=Q, 7=X, 8=E, 9=J, 10=P, 11=M, 12=L, 13=W, 14=H, 15=A, 16=Y, 17=R, 18=N, 19=G, 20=K, 21=O, 22=F, 23=B, 24=T, 25=L, 26=C. Word Spiral
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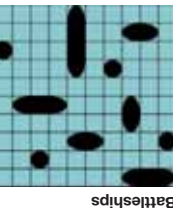
4	8	5	9	3	6	2	5	7	4	8
3	1	9	6	8	2	5	7	4	8	
6	7	2	1	4	8	3	5	9		
1	5	4	7	8	3	2	9	6		
2	6	8	9	1	4	5	7	3		
7	3	6	5	6	6	6	8	2	7	
9	3	1	4	5	6	6	8	2	7	
5	2	6	8	7	9	1	3	4		
8	4	7	2	3	1	9	6	5		

Sudoku - Hard



batteriesplus

8	2	5	7	9	3	1	4	6
4	3	1	6	8	2	5	7	9
9	6	7	4	1	2	3	5	8
2	5	4	1	3	7	8	5	4
7	5	4	9	6	8	3	2	1
3	1	8	2	5	4	9	6	7
9	3	1	8	2	5	4	9	6
1	4	9	5	2	6	7	8	3
5	7	3	8	4	6	9	6	1
6	8	2	3	7	1	4	9	5



The ultimate place to see penguins

ANDREA POWELL lived her dream to go penguin-watching in the Falkland Islands

I had long held ambitions of visiting the Falklands, so when the opportunity arose to combine an Antarctic cruise with a visit, it was a no-brainer. However, I soon realised that there was much more to this tiny UK colony than as a stop-gap to Antarctica.

Flying from Brize Norton – another one of those ‘must-do’ experiences – to the Ascension Islands then onto Mount Pleasant, 18 hours later we were there.

We had a couple of nights in Stanley and a full day battlefield tour booked. Other than that we could suit ourselves.

My Falklands research had led me to the warden’s cottage on Volunteer Point where one lucky pair of tourists can stay for the night. Although just three hours from Stanley, it was a bumpy drive.

After a quick introduction to the warden, it was time to head off to see penguins. We did not have to go

far. Just outside the door in fact was a whole colony of Gentoo penguins, the little ones only a couple of weeks old. Cute, fluffy and unafraid, they ran around, pecking at our feet.

Then onto a King penguin colony where many parents were guarding their unhatched eggs. As the sheep mixed with the cows who in turn mixed with the penguins I had to pinch myself.

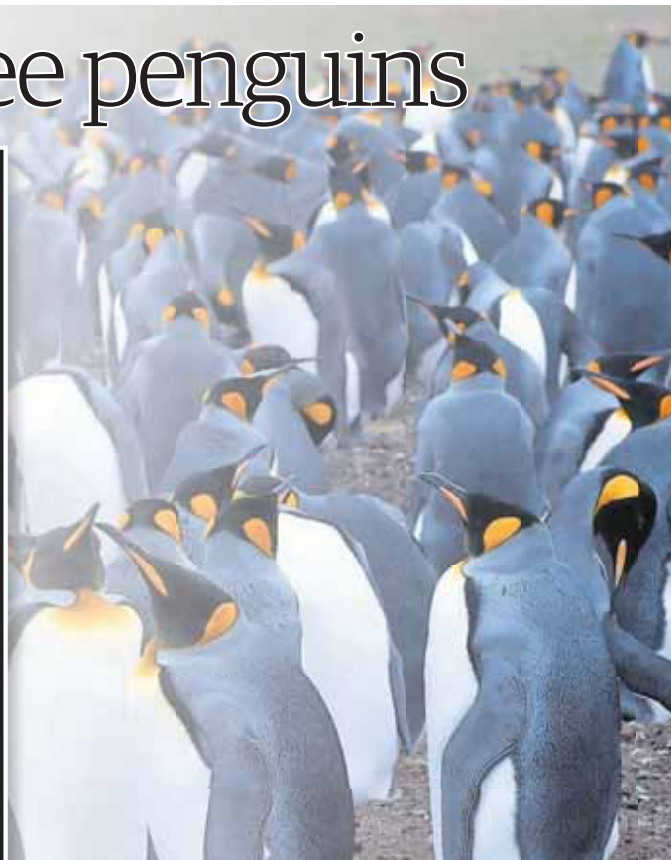
Ditto the following day. The alarm went off at 4.45am, and having found a suitable rock on which to perch, the light came up as dozens of majestic King penguins appeared over the brow of the hill and waddled eagerly towards the sea, keen to embark on their day’s fishing. Most ignored us completely. Those that did not were just curious. And one decided it would quite like a piece of our camera bag. We both held our breath, resisting the urge to reach out and try to touch. This really was A-MAZ-ING – everything I had dreamed of and more.

■ **When to go**
The climate lends itself to visiting during our winter (and their summer). January and February are peak season.

■ **How to get there**
LAN flies to the Falklands every Saturday morning, departing from Santiago and flying via the southern Chilean city of Punta Arenas. Once a month the flight also stops in Rio Gallegos (Argentina) in both directions. Flights depart from Brize Norton twice a week every Sunday and Wednesday.

■ **What to do**
The wildlife is just one of the attractions. There are also excellent itineraries for those wanting to learn about the Falklands history and culture.

■ **How much will it cost?**
Trips can be tailor-made but an eight day itinerary including flights, accommodation, transfers and tours typically costs from £2,795 per person.



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Service shines light in the dark

RECENT reports of prison violence have reminded us that prisons can be very dark and harrowing places. Thankfully this despair and violence has not pervaded all prisons.

A couple of weeks ago I was privileged to be invited to attend the carol service at Maidstone Prison. It was an enlightening experience which overturned many preconceptions of prison life.

As we were taken through the countless locked doors and gates, we were reminded of the grim reality of being incarcerated behind bars. But once the multi-national, multi-lingual service began, bright rays of light shone throughout the Chapel of the Good Shepherd.

It was a genuinely heart-warming and truly memorable service but the best was yet to come. Afterwards we were allowed to mingle with the inmates. It was such a joy to meet so many of these men, all good humoured, all appreciative of a few words of friendship and all with a remarkably positive perspective on life.

These gentlemen showed that there are indeed some bright lights shining in the dark recesses of Maidstone Prison.

Rob Bird,
 KCC member for Maidstone
 Central, Lib Dem

Why spending in debt is answer

FOLLOWING the financial crisis we have had eight years of debt and deficit scolding, particularly from the Conservative Party, which has surfed the post crisis wave by using it as a cover to impose dearly held small state ideology, without much of a mandate to do so.

It is misunderstandings like those shown in Dave Preston's letter [KoS 01.01] which has allowed the Tory government to get away with this for so long. Gross national debt net of bank interventions may be £1.66trn at November 2016, but the nominal value alone doesn't tell us much. We have no idea if this is really bad or not. Arguments constructed around just this figure, without context, are disingenuous.

We need also compare that to what we bring in as a nation on an annual basis, namely GDP, which nominally is £2trn. Therefore the ratio of debt to GDP is currently 84.5 per cent. Consider this: Immediately post war, the UK held a debt to GDP ratio north of 200 per cent but this did not stop the UK creating the NHS, expand social housing, implement a universal social security safety net, upgrade roads and other infrastructure without a second thought for debt levels well in excess of today's.

LETTER OF THE WEEK



He complains... then he joins in the debate

THERE was I thinking the dawn of a new year was a time for optimism when I turned to the letters page in KoS [last week].

Oh what depressing reading. Only the main letter from Ian Taylor made any constructive contribution. All the others were so negative.

One complaining about the proposed reintroduction of the national speed limit on the Sheppey Crossing, two others berating a previous correspondent for his support for grammar schools and another complaining that our national debt wouldn't be paid off in 200 years.

To the first I would suggest the reason the 50mph speed limit was widely ignored, particularly on the island bound side, was that it began too far away from the crossing.

Drivers confronted with a clear road ahead when the approach to the crossing was still several hundred metre away were disinclined to slow down because it seemed so unnecessary. To be potentially more effective the limit

should have been reduced to 60mph, then 50mph on the approach to the crossing. As for his comment on the 70mph speed limit being out of date, I agree with him, but not because it should be lowered, it should be raised.

The two people complaining about support for grammar schools seem to have very prejudiced views against them per se, when in reality it's not grammar schools themselves that are at fault, but the wealthy parents who refuse to acknowledge the fact their offspring having a relatively privileged upbringing does not necessarily make them suitable for a grammar school education.

Finally the contributor who seems to draw succour from pointing out the scale of our national debt, needs to look at the 'bigger picture'. Yes, we have our problems and we're facing great challenges, but this is still a very good country in which to live, far better than most.

Christopher Hudson-Gool
 Maidstone

This flatly contradicts Mr Preston's assertion that we cannot invest with debt at its current level. We certainly can, and indeed should; not doing so particularly with yields on UK gilts so low is an historic mistake.

It is not the accumulation of debt thanks to the macro economic effects of the collapse of the banks that will be borne by the next generation, it is the dereliction of duty to utilise the collapse in the cost of debt to invest in the nation's future that they will be shouldering. Osborne's tenure at the Treasury is a calamity that will echo down the generations.

And no, we need not be afraid of

bond vigilantes: UK debt is overwhelmingly held by UK institutions including £375bn held by the government itself through the Bank of England QE programme. There is more than enough demand for UK gilts to support a new deal style nationwide investment programme.

And no, we should not wait for the government to "pay off" the debt.

Two things here: Of the two parties Labour has the better record of "paying off" debt, but the amounts paid back in 2000-01 were easily swallowed up by the deficits that had to be run by the government post financial crisis. Those funds

(generated by the sale of the 3G spectrum to mobile phone providers) were therefore catastrophically wasted. Second, I correctly predicted that George Osborne would not meet his meaningless surplus goal, not only were his badly conceived policies actively working against him doing so, but so was history and mathematics. Governments in the West naturally run budget deficits, and I'm glad we do. They pay for the kind of civilised society we enjoy today (much of it now at risk from a swirl of very bad ideas).

More than that though, governments simply do not pay back debt. The cast iron, historical economic fact is this; they "grow" out of it.

Ben Murphy,
 Sittingbourne

Speed limits do not save lives

CLIVE Wilkins-Oppler's [KoS letters, last week] hatred of cars moving anything above snail's pace, is familiar to anybody that reads local newspapers and hence his condemnation of the reinstatement of the national speed limit on the A249 in the Sheppey area, is not unexpected.

This allows him to write such gibberish as "excessive speed is the single biggest cause of road traffic accidents" when the Department for Transport figures show on average that "exceeding the speed limit" accounts for five per cent and "travelling too fast for conditions" is about 12 per cent. By far the biggest cause at 42 per cent is "failed to look properly".

Terry Hudson,
 Whitstable

Dickens article was perfect tonic

HAVING just read the article regarding Charles Dickens' Christmas Carol [KoS, 25.12], I feel the contributor and reporter did the subject proud - well done!

"More please" seems most appropriate.
GAC Elliott,
 via email

Cheers to the rise in breweries

WITH regard to Kent breweries [KoS, last week] we were indeed just down to Shepherd Neame by the 1990s as regards the big boys, but in the past 20 years or so over 30 new small brewers have emerged across the county.

Much as I enjoy a pint of Sheps, the present is also an excellent time to be a real ale drinker with plenty of choice for all tastes.

Alan Bullion,
 Tunbridge Wells

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AS part of our commitment to providing the best service to you, we have produced our 10 guiding principles

Kent on Sunday will:

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- 3) Be written in clear, concise English.
- 4) Not be overly sensational.
- 5) Have a sense of humour.
- 6) Have an easily understood division between news, comment and advertising.
- 7) Seek to celebrate as well as constructively criticise.
- 8) Highlight topical issues of concern to East

people living in the county.

9) Spotlight individual cases which raise broader concerns.

10) Champion causes that it feels are important to the well-being of the county and its people.

We hope you enjoy Kent on Sunday.
kent-life.co.uk kentnews.co.uk



Benches at Tankerton

by **David Mathias**
from Strood

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INSIGNIA: The design team has opted for a four-door coupé style

Next Insignia breaks cover early

PREVIEW: New Vauxhall flagship is even smarter and lower than its multiple award-winning predecessor, yet boasts more space than before...

VAUXHALL has whipped the wraps off the Insignia replacement well ahead of its world premiere at the Geneva Show in March.

And this bid to steal the New Year motoring limelight works: the next Insignia is a good-looking car, building on the lines of a predecessor that scooped European Car of the Year 2009.

The German-based but British-led design team has opted for a four-door coupé style now in vogue at this level and justifying the extended name 'Insignia Grand Sport'.

And yet the interior is more spacious despite class-leading aerodynamics, says Vauxhall.

The car is also 175 kilos lighter – more than the weight of two average male adult passengers – to boost economy and handling.

Powertrain information is sketchy at present, but a wide range is expected and includes an intelligent new eight-speed auto transmission; the total package will influence the car's appeal to tax-conscious company drivers.

But the Insignia's eye-catching style has a part to play: it is nearly 3cm lower than before and generally looks lower, wider, and sportier.

It still has a tough job ahead.

Total 2016 UK car registrations have yet to be confirmed, but Vauxhall is claiming 30,000 for the outgoing Insignia, good only for a mid-20s



position in the chart.

If that sounds sad though, spare a thought for the rival that was a perennial UK No1 in a past generation: Ford's Mondeo will be lucky to be in the 40s when last year's sales placings are finalised.

The damage has been done in the meantime

by the Mercedes-Benz C-Class and BMW 3 Series respectively, which have overtaken the erstwhile champs in this sector thanks to their snob badges and low depreciation that makes them such an easy choice for company car users and their hard-nosed fleet managers or suppliers.



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Big Swede's new assault on Germans

Using the new S90 and its estate car sister, Volvo aims to reclaim lost ground in the big car sector, writes **Steve Loader...**

VOLVO used to be big in big cars, but sales were clobbered by down-sizing that struck the whole big car sector.

The Swedish brand's outgoing S80 saloon – worthy, though it was – also struggled to match the cachet and driver engagement of German rivals.

But Volvo aims to hit back with the all-new S90 saloon and equivalent V90 estate.

They are lighter, stiffer, and more spacious, eco-friendly and tax efficient, all helped by a modular vehicle platform developed for a whole new generation of Volvos, and already used on the excellent XC90.

The low slung S90 also looks superb and is eco-friendly for such a big car: diesel CO2 emissions are as low as 116g/km (S90) or 119g/km (V90), thereby attracting just £20 a year road tax after year one.

A 'Twin Engine' petrol-electric plug-in hybrid is also due soon, with an estimated 30-mile all-electric range and claimed official fuel economy of more than 100mpg.

This won't come cheap, but no S90 is a snip; rather than hunting big volumes, the newcomer is pitched higher than the S80 – from £32,555, with the V90 attracting a £2,000



premium – and seeks discerning buyers attracted by technological prowess, Volvo's traditional emphasis on safety, and a classy Scandinavian cabin.

Volvo seems to have created the in-car touchscreen of the moment too: first seen on its excellent XC90

SUV, this could be the motoring equivalent of the iPad, with a big display and intuitive operation.

Our test car was an upmarket Inscription spec 190hp 2.0-litre D4 diesel with eight-speed automatic, which sometimes feels slow to change but, nevertheless, will power



this big yet relatively light car to 60mph in under eight seconds.

But the S90 is at its best when motorway cruising: it feels effortless and quiet.

The big Swede is less comfortable on the twisty stuff, falling short of German rivals on its standard

Volvo S90 D4 Inscription

Price:	from £35,555
Driving appeal:	★★★★
Image:	★★★★
Space:	★★★★
Value:	★★★★
Running costs:	★★★★
How green?:	★★★★
Best rival:	BMW 5 Series

suspension: comfort is clearly the priority and it can dip and wallow when driven hard, but there is an optional air suspension and the forthcoming R-Design might be a solution for keen drivers. All-wheel drive is also available in the range.

Living with the car is typically easy: the airy cabin looks and is enormous, with superb legroom for all, great views out and a high quality design and materials, though the wood finishing on the test car's dashboard looked a lot cheaper than it probably was.

The seats – trimmed in sumptuous Nappa leather on our car – are super-comfortable in the Volvo tradition, but it's clear that the spacious interior has robbed the car of some boot space: 500 litres is only average for the class though access is good and the seats have a split/fold facility for longer loads.



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Monday-Friday Term time only, plus 2 weeks*

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Monday-Friday Term time only, plus 2 weeks*

*For these roles there will also be up to a maximum of two weeks for the school's respite care provision if required, for which extra payment would be paid.

For all posts we look for candidates who are able to demonstrate maturity, and who are warm, creative and open to learning. Candidates must have a patient and caring attitude and be able to deal sensitively with vulnerable children.

We are committed to sustainability and preserving the environment and therefore encourage applications by email, so for an application form and information pack please email **personnel@bradstow.wandsworth.sch.uk**.

Or you may call **01843 608727** (24 hour recruitment answer machine).

Please note that CV's will not be considered.

The closing date for all applications is midnight Friday 20th January 2017 and interviews will be held on the 3rd February 2017.



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LEGAL AND PUBLIC NOTICES

Goods Vehicle Operator's Licence

Triple Nine Waste Management Ltd of Unit Z, Transfesa Road, Paddock Wood Distribution Centre, Paddock Wood, Kent TN12 6UU is applying for a new operating license as follows: To Keep 3 vehicles at the operating centre Unit Z, Transfesa Road, Paddock Wood Distribution Centre, Paddock Wood, Kent TN12 6UU.

Owners or occupiers of land (including buildings) near the operating centre(s) who believe that their use or enjoyment of that land would be affected, should make written representations to the Traffic Commissioner at Hillcrest House, 386 Harehills Lane, Leeds, LS9 6NF, stating their reasons, within 21 days of this notice. Representatives must at the same time send a copy of their representations to the applicant at the address given at the top of this notice. A Guide to Making Representations is available from the Traffic Commissioner's office.

LICENSING ACT 2003

Variation of Premises Licence

Take notice that the Halpern Charitable Foundation, has made an application in accordance with the Licensing Act 2003 for a Variation of the Premises Licence for the Nucleus Arts Centre, 272 High St, Chatham ME4 4BP.

The application is for an extension to the hours of the licensable activity, Sale of Alcohol, which is currently 11:00 to 23:00 Sun to Thurs; 11:00 to 01:00 Fri & Sat. The extended hours will be from 07:00 to 23:00 Sun to Thurs, and 07:00 to 01:00 Fri & Sat. Hours of opening will also change to reflect the 07:00 start of potential licensable activity. Finally, Sale of Alcohol will change from "on the premises" to "on and off the premises".

This application has been made to Medway Council, Gun Wharf, Dock Road, Chatham, Kent ME4 4TR. Full details of the application can be viewed at Gun Wharf, Dock Road, Chatham, Kent ME4 4TR during normal hours of business.

Any interested party who wishes to make a representation about this application should do so in writing to Medway Council, Gun Wharf, Dock Road, Chatham, Kent ME4 4TR or by sending an email to licensing@medway.gov.uk no later than the 21st Jan 2017.

It is an offence knowingly or recklessly to make a false statement in connection with an application which, upon conviction, carries a maximum fine of £5000.



A20 TRUNK ROAD ALKHAM VALLEY INTERCHANGE AND COURTWOOD INTERCHANGE TEMPORARY TRAFFIC RESTRICTIONS

Notice is hereby given that Highways England Company Limited(a) intends to make an Order on the A20 Trunk Road in County of Kent, under section14(1) (a) of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 because works are proposed to be executed on the road.

The effect of the Order would be to authorise the overnight closure of the slip roads leading to and from both carriageways of the A20 at the Alkham Valley Interchange (A260) and Courtwood Interchange (B2011).

These measures would be in the interests of road safety to enable contractors to undertake cyclic maintenance and/or urgent repair work.

It is expected that the work would take place for approximately two nights for each slip road every two months between 20:00 and 05:00 (maximum period).

The Order would come into force on 21 January 2017 and have a maximum duration of twelve months.

During the closures above, traffic would be diverted via other junctions of the A20.

The slip road closures and diversion routes would be clearly indicated by traffic signs throughout the works periods.

M Taylor, an Official of Highways England Co Ltd.
Ref: HA/A20/35/3/2286

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Scally laughs off Lions relocation

Plans to bring Millwall's base to Kent deemed 'not a concern'

Football

By Tom Pyman

tom.pyman@archant.co.uk

GILLINGHAM chairman Paul Scally has dismissed speculation that Millwall could relocate to Kent as "not a concern".

It comes ahead of a crunch south-east London council meeting next week in which Lewisham councillors are expected to give the green light to plans to compulsorily purchase areas around the League One club's famous ground, the Den, and sell them on to an offshore developer.

Only this week has the club publicly acknowledged it could relocate, with its academy reportedly now unable to function under the current proposals in addition to the planned eviction of the community trust and the club's exclusion from benefits of the council's regeneration scheme.

The north Kent coast has reportedly been mooted in the past and the club has now revealed it is having to assess all possible options, with its Bermondsey base appearing less and less viable.

Millwall chief executive Steve Kavanagh, said: "The chairman has always been determined that this would never happen, but under such circumstances any and every option would have to be considered to secure the football club and the Millwall Community Trust's future as viable concerns."

The Lions are not the only London outfit setting their sites on Kent, after Crystal Palace chairman Steve Parish told KoS last year he was looking for a new training ground in the county.

As Kent's only Football League



UNMOVED: Paul Scally has dismissed speculation Millwall could move to the county
Pictures: ANDY ARCHER

club, Gillingham bosses would be forgiven for feeling irked if Millwall were to relocate in the near future, however, chairman Mr Scally told us: "It's not a concern at all."

"This is a long way off materialising and I honestly don't see it happening."

It comes in a whirlwind week for

the Gills in which Justin Edinburgh was sacked as manager following a poor set of results, with Mr Scally appointing a coaching team of former defender Adrian Pennock, Jamie Day and Steve Lovell to replace him in the dugout.

■ See page 11 of this week's newspaper for the full story.

Former batsman Walker named head coach

Cricket

FORMER Kent batsman Matt Walker has been named as the club's new head coach.

Walker, 43, spent 16 of his 19-year playing career in the county, scoring more than 12,000 first class runs and top-scored in Kent's Twenty20 Cup Final win in 2007.

He also holds Kent's record individual score at The Spitfire Ground, St Lawrence, 275 not out against Somerset in 1996.

The Gravesend-born coach has also worked with Essex and England Lions and served for three years as assistant coach to Jimmy Adams, who stepped down as boss last year.

Walker said: "Having grown up as a Kent player and played 16 seasons



APPOINTED: Matt Walker

for this great county, I am extremely honoured and proud to be offered the head coach role.

"We have an exciting and talented squad that I believe is capable of challenging across all three formats."

"I am relishing this opportunity and will work with skipper Sam Northeast and Allan Donald to bring success to the club."

Former South Africa fast bowler Donald, 50, who has worked at Warwickshire and enjoyed coaching spells with the Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and England teams will be his number two.

Club chairman George Kennedy added: "Matt was the outstanding candidate from the recruitment process. He is a modern, innovative coach who is highly regarded by players and peers as shown by the work he has done with Kent and England. His knowledge and passion for the club is an added bonus."

Sport Shorts

» Email sports@kosmedia.co.uk or call Tom Pyman on 01233653477

Burman 'disappointed' as Gardiner takes leave

DARTFORD defender Tom Gardiner has left the National League South club, after claiming he could no longer travel from his home in Hertfordshire.

The 21-year-old signed a six-month contract in the summer, with both parties agreeing to review the situation at Christmas.

While the club were keen to extend the centre-half's deal, Gardiner has expressed his intention to sign for a more local outfit.

Boss Tony Burman said: "I am disappointed with Tom's decision as he had been offered new terms."

"We have spent the last year and a half improving Tom as a player but I have to understand that he has been finding it difficult with his work commitments and travelling from his home in Harpenden, Hertfordshire."

"It looks like he will be joining a new club nearer to home which for him will make things easier."

Meanwhile, fringe player Ellis Brown also took to the exit door this week as he joined Thamesmead.



REGRET: Tony Burman



HOME: Lydden Hill will no longer host rallycross when it moves in 2016

Rallycross set to move from traditional home

RALLYCROSS will move from its traditional Kent home from next year after bosses signed a deal to allow Silverstone to host a new motorsport event in 2018.

The event will form the British leg of the FIA World Rallycross Championship, replacing the round currently hosted by the Lydden Hill circuit.

Chiefs say the move comes at a

pivotal time in rallycross history with the sport due to celebrate its 50th anniversary this year and continue its rapid growth.

Paul Bellamy, World RX managing director at IMG, said: "We have been in talks internally for some time about creating a large scale motorsport festival weekend and we are delighted that Silverstone is able to share our vision for the future."

Dover snap up utility man Hurst

DOVER Athletic have snapped up a product of Premier League side West Bromwich Albion's academy in their first bit of January business.

Utility man James Hurst arrived at Crabble this week from National League North side Telford as Dover boss Chris Kinnear looks to bolster his squad as they push for promotion to the Football League.

The 24-year-old has also played in

the National League for Torquay United and at Guiseley, while on loan from the Gulls.

Capable of playing at full-back, on the wing or behind the striker, Hurst has had two loan spells at Shrewsbury Town and also has spells for Birmingham, Crawley and Northampton on his CV.

Dover were sitting pretty in fifth going into the weekend.

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